

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 4, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Further organization of the Government for dealing with Cuba

On your oral instructions conveyed by General Clifton, I have met with an interdepartmental group to try to work out an improved arrangement for our handling of Cuban policy and action in 1963. The time is ripe for such a reorganization, because we seem to be winding up the negotiations in New York, the prisoners are out, and there is well nigh universal agreement that Mongoose is at a dead end. The people with whom I have been working are: Vance, Yarmolinsky and General Wheeler as delegates for McNamara and Gilpatric; Nick Katzenbach as a delegate of Bobby; Pat Carter from CIA; and Alexis Johnson and Ed Martin from State Department.

The following paragraphs represent my personal sense of what we have worked out together, and while there may be some small differences of point of view or need for revision, I think they are ripe for your consideration.

1. The first guiding principle is that final policy responsibility should remain with you, working with the Executive Committee when necessary. There is no point pretending that major Cuban policy decisions can be made anywhere else than in the White House, and your own executive role, supplemented by the Executive Committee when there are major policy issues or interdepartmental difficulties, is indispensable.
2. The more complicated matter is where to put day-to-day coordinating responsibility. After considerable discussion, the unanimous consensus is that we should locate this responsibility in a Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, working as a deputy to Ed Martin in the State Department and acting as chairman of an interdepartmental group on Cuba. The Coordinator would be responsible to Dean Rusk and Ed Martin for departmental business, and, under this guidance, to

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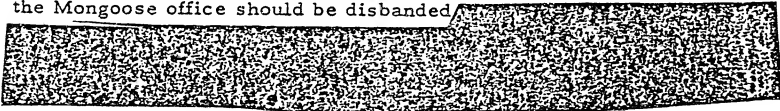
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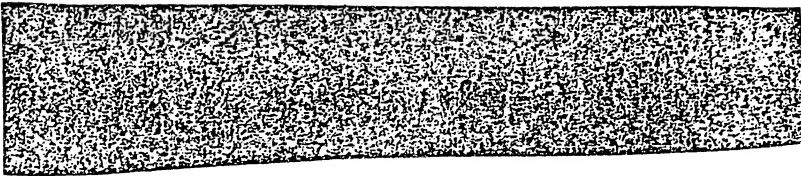
you and the Executive Committee for interdepartmental coordination. Nothing in his authority would supplant the responsibility of other operating departments for management of their own assigned tasks, or their right to be consulted before their resources are committed; but it would be clear that you and the Executive Committee were looking to the Coordinator and his interdepartmental committee for effective execution of your policy decisions. In ordinary circumstances, the necessary coordination will be carried out effectively by good will and good sense on all sides. When there is an honest difference that cannot be resolved it will, of course, have to come upstairs one way or another.

The key to this administrative organization is, of course, the individual appointed as coordinator. The recommendation of the State Department is that Sterling Cottrell should be given this job. He has been doing a very solid and constructive job as head of the Vietnamese Task Force, and he is due for reassignment to Latin American Affairs, which turn out to be his preferred professional field, both by experience and by interest. He has the necessary professional seniority in the Department, and high interdepartmental acceptance. He has worked well with the White House staff.

If this arrangement should be approved, the Cuban desk of the Department would be absorbed in a new, higher level Office of Cuban Affairs under Cottrell, with Bob Hurwitch as his deputy. Hurwitch has done a very able job within the Department, but he is a little junior for a major job of interdepartmental coordination. At the same time, Cottrell would be expected to find and appoint a deputy coordinator, to be based in Miami, to handle day-to-day relations with Cuban refugees and with interested agencies of Government on the spot. Bill Orrick has been asked to expedite effective interdepartmental administrative support, as necessary, for both the Coordinator and the Miami office.

3. If a Coordinator for Cuban Affairs is established, then we think the Mongoose office should be disbanded.

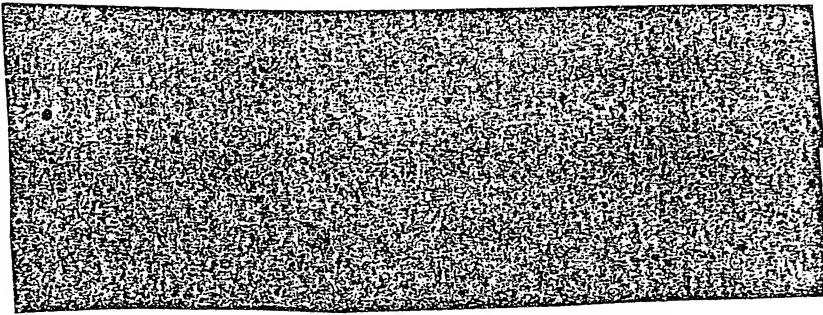




4. The problem of organization is of course less than half the battle: what we really need is to sort out our policies toward Cuba. There are a number of loose ends, large and small, of which the following are samples:

a. The shipping orders and the broader question of economic pressure on Cuba are still unsettled. Executive Orders have been prepared along the lines of your press conference statement, but they are being held up, as I think Dean Rusk has explained to you, pending discussion with OAS and other Allies. The State Department will take any public rap for this delay.

b. The organization and handling of refugees needs restudy. We need a much more open and continuous communication with refugee leaders, and we need clarification of the opportunities to be offered to Cuban volunteers, whether or not they are veterans of the brigade. If we can manage it, we need to get a stronger process of representation of free Cubans.



e. The political, psychological, and personal aspects of the effort to isolate Castro's Cuba should be pursued intensively in the OAS. We do not want Cuba to be a hemispheric training ground for Communists, and we have not exhausted our weapons here.

f. We need to keep up a continuous and high-level barrage of public statements explicitly defending our rights of surveillance. You said on television that the camera will be our best inspector and this position should be energetically sustained.

g. The question of Pan American flights should be reviewed. My own view, which Ed Martin shares, is that it is probably to our advantage to have such flights, and that Juan Trippe should not be allowed to get away with poor-mouthing on the cost to Pan American. Over the long run this franchise is of the highest importance to Pan American, and nothing I have heard about their marginal losses is very impressive.

5. It would help to have your general reaction to these matters by Monday. If you approve, we could put the organization into effect at once and have a preliminary discussion of the substantive issues by Cottrell's people with the Executive Committee before the end of next week.

*h.c.B.*

McG. B.